

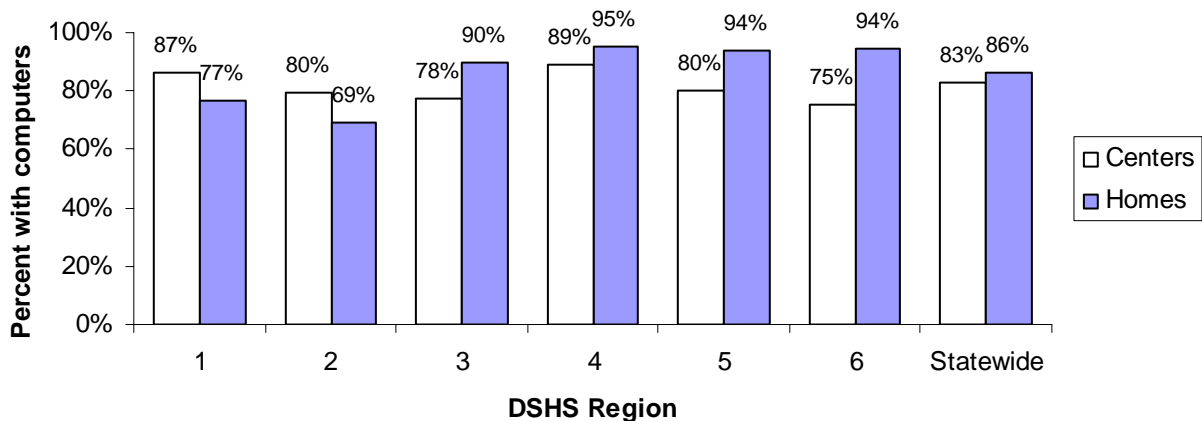
CHAPTER 7. SPECIAL TOPICS

Computer and Internet Access among Child Care Providers

The Department of Social and Health Services uses the Internet as one way to communicate with providers. Child care providers were asked on the 2002 and 2004 surveys about computer and Internet access in order to understand how much of the provider community can be reached through the Internet.

Figure 52 shows the percent of center and family home providers with a computer in their place of business. Statewide, 83 percent of centers and 86 percent of home providers had a computer in their place of business. The percent of centers with computers varied from a low of 75 percent in Region 6 to a high of 89 percent in Region 4. Homes varied from 69 percent in Region 2 to 95 percent in Region 4, showing a definite division between the eastern (Regions 1 and 2) and western parts of the state (Regions 3-6). In all Regions except Regions 1 and 2, center providers were less likely than home providers to have a computer in their workplace.

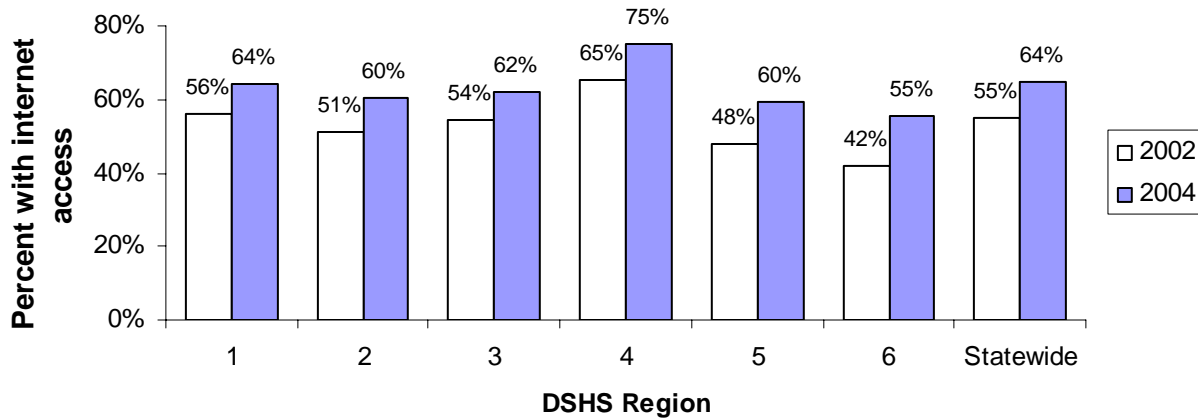
Figure 52. Percent of Centers and Homes with Computers, 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Surveys of Child Care Centers and Family Homes

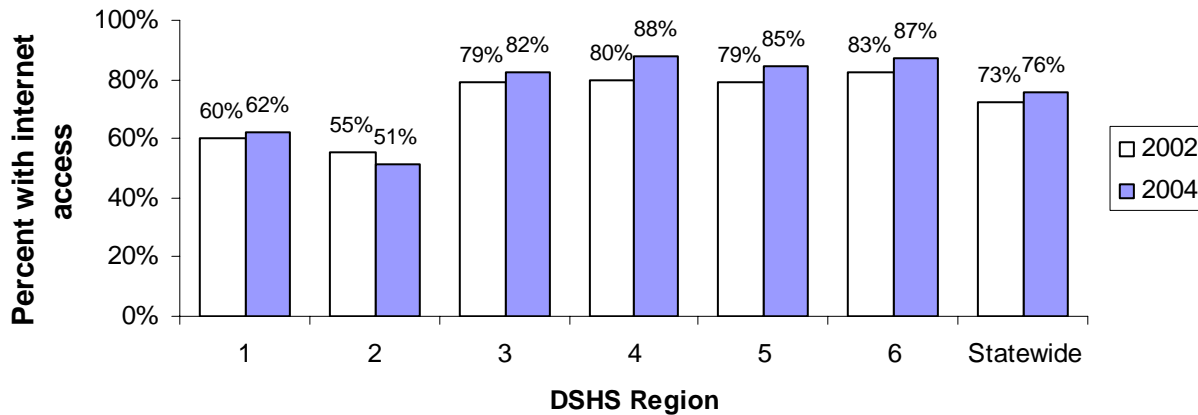
While the percentage of centers and family homes with computers in their place of business was stable between 2002 and 2004, the percentage of providers with on-site Internet access increased, most dramatically in centers. Figures 53 and 54 show the percentage of center and family home providers in each Region with Internet access in both 2002 and 2004. Statewide, Internet access in centers increased from 55 percent in 2002 to 64 percent in 2004. Region 4 had the highest percentage of centers with Internet access at 75 percent in contrast to 55 percent in Region 6. Family homes showed less increase in Internet access, but access increased slightly in all Regions except Region 2. Internet access for family homes in the eastern Regions (1 and 2) is much lower than in western Washington (Regions 3-6).

Figure 53. Percent of Centers with Internet Access, 2002 and 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2002 and 2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

Figure 54. Percent of Homes with Internet Access, 2002 and 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2002 and 2004 Surveys of Family Homes

Internet access was analyzed against several business traits including: length of time in business; capacity for centers; whether the facility cared for DSHS children; and gross child care income in family homes. Capacity was a strong indicator for centers, with 81 percent of centers with a capacity greater than 60 having Internet access as compared to 56 percent for those with smaller capacity. In family homes, whether or not the provider cared for DSHS-subsidized children was a strong predictor of Internet access: 84 percent of providers who did not care for DSHS-subsidized children had Internet access in their home, compared to only 71 percent for providers that cared for DSHS-subsidized children.

Resource and Referral Services

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network (R&R) is a private, non-profit agency that DSHS contracts with to provide services to child care providers. Several new questions were added to the 2002 and 2004 surveys to see which R&R services were helpful to providers. In 2004, providers were asked if four specific R&R services had been helpful to them in the past year: referral services; state approved (STARS) training through Resource and Referral; over the phone technical assistance; and grants to purchase learning and play materials.

Tables 39 and 40 show the percent of providers that found each of the four individual services helpful, as well as the percent that found any of the four listed R&R services useful to them in the past year. Many providers (68 percent of centers and 84 percent of homes) reported that at least one of the four services had been helpful to them in the past year. A higher proportion of homes than centers found each of the services useful, with roughly a 10 percentage point difference between centers and homes for all categories except Purchasing Grants. Region 1 had the largest difference between centers and homes, with 56 percent of centers and 82 percent of home providers finding at least one of the listed R&R services helpful to them in the past year.

Table 39. Percent of Centers Finding Resource and Referral Services Helpful in the Past Year, 2004

Region	Referrals	STARS Training	Technical Assistance	Purchasing Grants	Any of 4 Listed Services
1	36%	46%	19%	10%	56%
2	49%	61%	23%	12%	74%
3	41%	54%	16%	11%	64%
4	45%	64%	28%	12%	75%
5	59%	59%	29%	7%	75%
6	46%	50%	29%	7%	62%
Statewide	46%	57%	25%	10%	68%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

Table 40. Percent of Homes Finding Resource and Referral Services Helpful in the Past Year, 2004

Region	Referrals	STARS Training	Technical Assistance	Purchasing Grants	Any of 4 Listed Services
1	54%	73%	34%	13%	82%
2	53%	81%	37%	16%	89%
3	52%	63%	30%	12%	82%
4	55%	61%	29%	11%	80%
5	72%	66%	39%	9%	85%
6	66%	74%	42%	13%	88%
Statewide	58%	69%	35%	13%	84%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes

Table 41 displays the proportion of family home providers finding R&R services helpful by whether or not they cared for DSHS-subsidized children. For centers, Table 41 distinguishes those centers with 10 percent or fewer children subsidized by DSHS (categorized as “Low”) from all other centers (categorized as “High”). Generally, providers that cared for subsidized children were more likely to have found R&R services useful in the past year. The most dramatic difference was referral services for centers, where only 33 percent of those centers categorized as “Low” found the service useful, compared to 60 percent in the “High” Category.

Table 41. Percent of Homes and Centers Finding Resource and Referral Services Helpful in Past Year, by DSHS, 2004

Centers:					
Percent DSHS*	Referrals	STARS Training	Technical Assistance	Purchasing Grants	Any of 4 Listed Services
Low	33%	58%	20%	7%	67%
High	60%	72%	38%	13%	86%

Homes:					
Serves DSHS	Referrals	STARS Training	Technical Assistance	Purchasing Grants	Any of 4 Listed Services
No	55%	64%	31%	13%	82%
Yes	60%	72%	37%	13%	86%

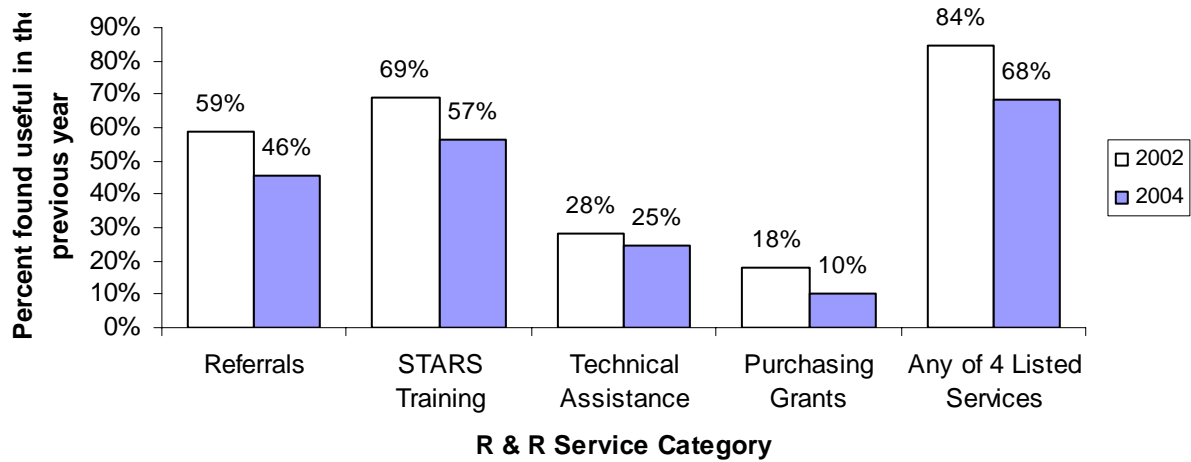
* Centers with 10 percent or fewer of their children subsidized by DSHS are categorized as “Low” and all other centers are categorized “High”.

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Surveys of Child Care Centers and Family Homes

Figures 55 and 56 present information on responses to the R&R questions on the 2002 and 2004 surveys. On the 2002 survey providers were asked about the usefulness of six R&R services. This comparison is limited to the four services repeated on both surveys. The proportion of centers saying that R&R services were useful declined from 82 percent to 68 percent for centers and 89 percent to 84 percent for family homes.

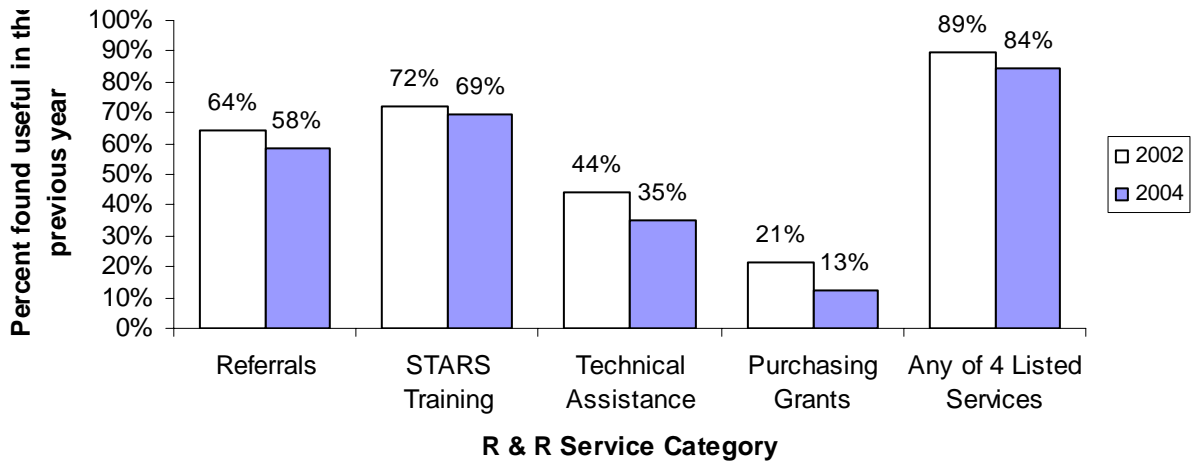
In noting this decline, it is important to keep in mind two major policy changes that affected R&R services during this time. The Recruitment and Retention program was discontinued in February 2003, eliminating many business support and training services as well as Mini Grants for facilities. In July 2003, the provider service hours for R&R services were reduced to 15 hours a week, which may have contributed to the reduction in the statewide percentage of centers and homes finding at least one of the four listed R&R services useful.

Figure 55. Percent of Centers Finding Resource and Referral Services Helpful in 2002 and 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2002 and 2004 Surveys of Child Care Centers

Figure 56. Percent of Homes Finding Resource and Referral Services Helpful in 2002 and 2004

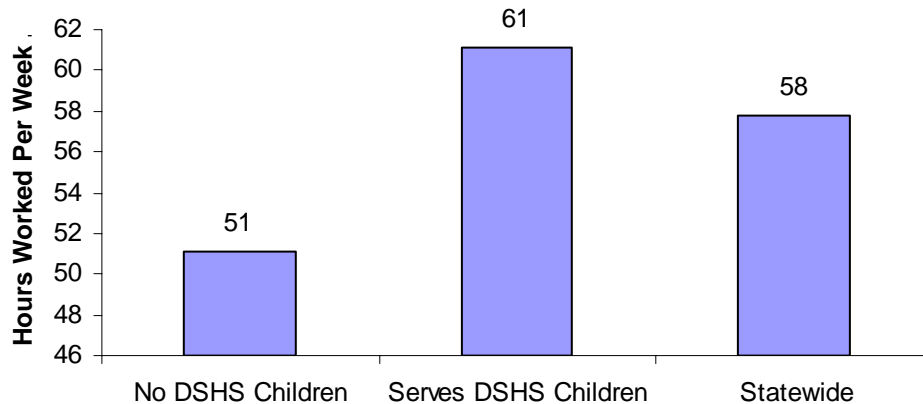


Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Surveys of Child Care Centers and Family Home

Work Hours of Family Home Providers

The 2004 surveys asked family home providers about the number of hours per week that they cared for children. The average number of hours that family home providers worked per week varied only slightly by Region from a low of 53 hours per week in Region 4 to a high of 62 hours per week in Region 2. The biggest factor identified as related to the number of hours worked per week was whether or not the provider cared for DSHS-subsidized children. As shown in Figure 57, family home providers that cared for DSHS-subsidized children averaged 61 hours per week compared to 51 hours per week for providers that did not care for DSHS-subsidized children.

Figure 57. Average Hours Per Week Worked By Home Providers by Serving DSHS-Subsidized Children, 2004

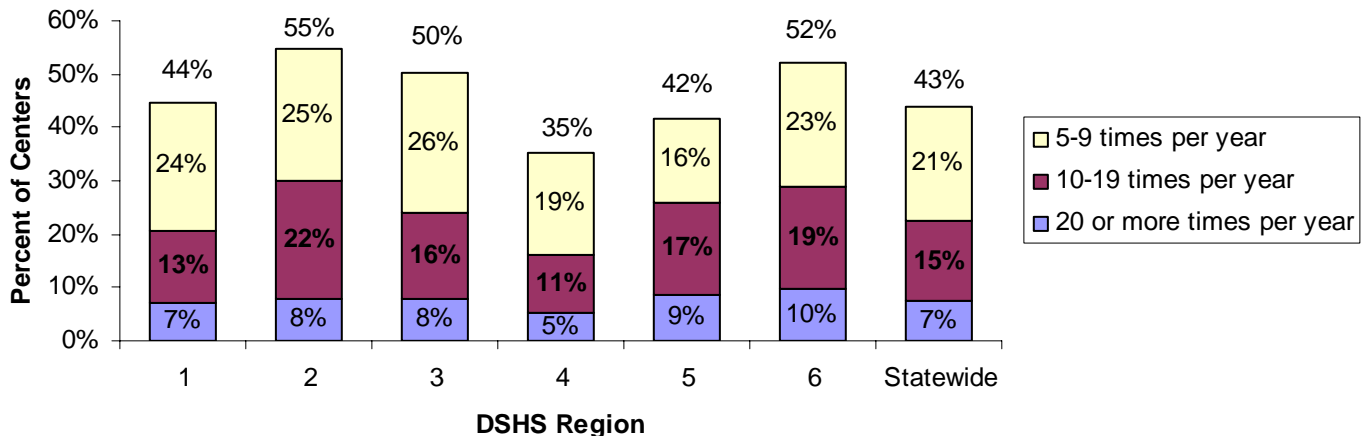


Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes

Contact with DSHS Licensing Staff

Center and home providers were asked how many times per year they, or someone on their staff, had called their licensur and how long it typically took licensurs to return those calls. Figures 58 and 59 display the percent of centers and homes that contacted their licensur five or more times per year. The proportion of centers contacting their licensur five or more times per year varied by Region, over half of all centers in Region 6 called their licensur at least five times per year and only 35 percent of centers in Region 4 called that often. In 2002, 39 percent of centers contacted their licensur at least five times per year.

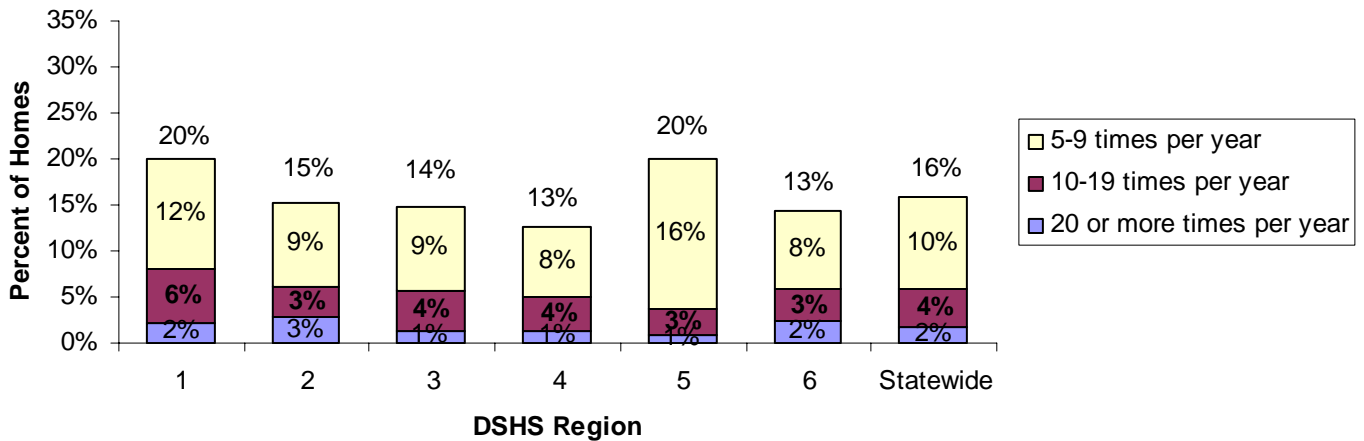
Figure 58. Percent of Centers Contacting their Licensur at Least Five Times per Year, by Region, 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

The proportion of family home providers contacting their licensur at least five times per year was much lower than that for centers, with only 16 percent of all home providers having called their licensur at least five times per year compared to 43 percent for centers. On the 2002 survey, 18 percent of home providers called their licensur that often.

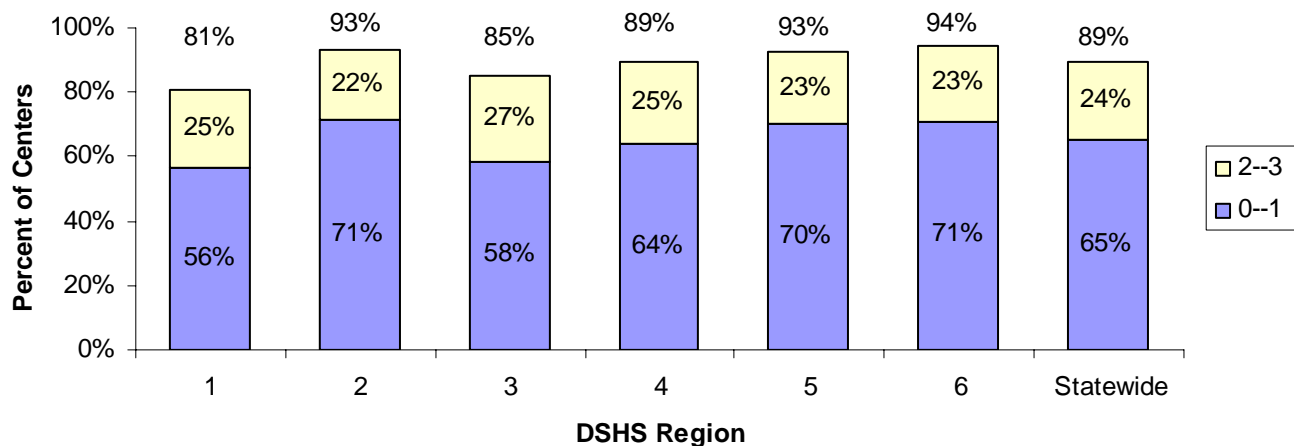
Figure 59. Percent of Home Providers Contacting their Licensor at Least Five Times per Year, by Region, 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes

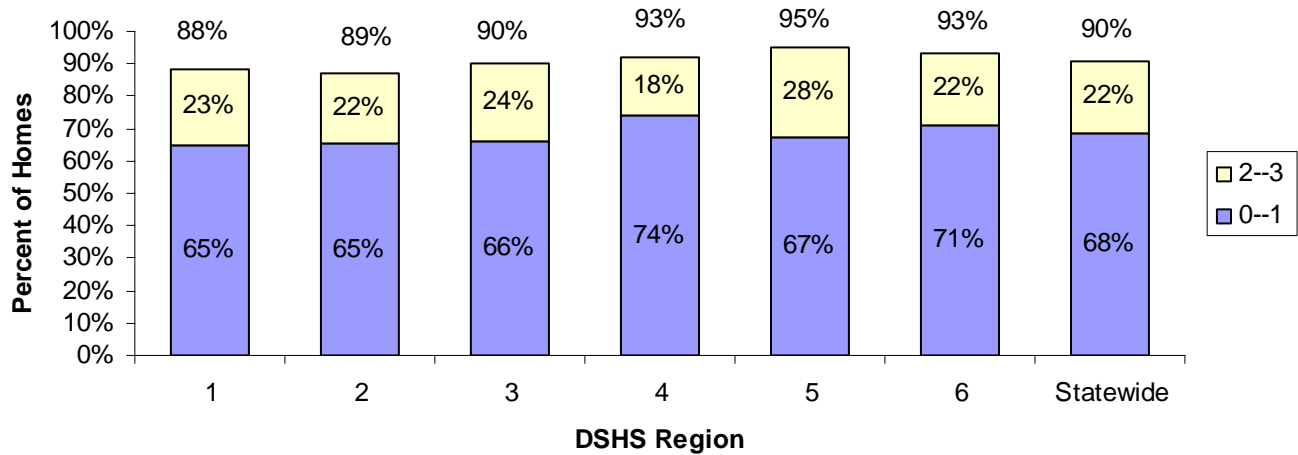
Figures 60 and 61 display the percent of centers and homes whose licensors generally returned their phone calls within three business days. Only providers who contacted their licensor at least once in the past year are included in these figures. The proportion of providers whose calls were generally returned within three business days is quite high for both center and family home providers. The only category where less than 85 percent of providers said that their calls were returned within three days was center providers in Region 1. The percent of centers receiving return phone calls from their licensor within three business days was unchanged from the 2002 survey. The percent for family homes was down slightly from 92 percent in 2002 to 90 percent in 2004.

Figure 60. Percent of Centers Receiving Return Phone Calls from their Licensor Within Three Business Days, by Region, 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

Figure 61. Percent of Homes Receiving Return Phone Calls from their Licensor Within Three Business Days, by Region, 2004



Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes

Child Turnover

On the 2004 survey, questions were added to investigate the number of children leaving providers and the reasons why they left. Center and family home providers were asked to select from the following four choices the one that best described child turnover in their facility in the past few months: more children left than usual, the same number of children left, fewer children left than usual; or no children left. Tables 42 and 43 show the percentages of providers selecting each category.

Table 42. Child Turnover in Centers by Region, 2004

Region	Higher than Usual	About the Same	Lower than Usual	No Children Leaving
1	25%	33%	25%	17%
2	14%	38%	23%	24%
3	17%	35%	31%	17%
4	16%	40%	19%	25%
5	13%	46%	21%	20%
6	18%	39%	21%	22%
Statewide	17%	39%	23%	21%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

Table 43. Child Turnover in Family Homes by Region, 2004

Region	Higher than Usual	About the Same	Lower than Usual	No Children Leaving
1	16%	17%	14%	54%
2	17%	19%	10%	54%
3	13%	17%	12%	57%
4	10%	24%	14%	52%
5	18%	13%	9%	60%
6	14%	17%	12%	57%
Statewide	14%	18%	12%	55%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes

Statewide, only a small percentage of facilities reported that more children had left their business than usual: values ranged from a low of 10 percent for family homes in Region 4 to a high of 25 percent for centers in Region 1. Over half the family homes in every Region reported that no children had left their care in the past few months. For centers, the proportion with no turnover ranged from 17 to 25 percent.

Providers that had children leave in the months prior to the survey were asked if the following reasons were important in why children left: parents could not afford the co-payments; parents lost their jobs and no longer needed child care; and parents moved out of the area. Tables 44 and 45 show the percent of providers reporting that each reason was important as a factor in why children had left their business in the past few months. In almost all cases, parents becoming unemployed and not needing child care was more likely to be identified as an important factor in why children left their facility than either of the other two reasons, more important than families moving or having difficulty in paying co-payments.

Table 44. Percent Reporting Reason as Important in Child Turnover in Centers, by Region, 2004

Region	Can't afford Copay	Parent Unemployed	Family Moved
1	47%	64%	51%
2	39%	70%	56%
3	25%	71%	66%
4	30%	54%	55%
5	31%	65%	51%
6	27%	75%	58%
Statewide	32%	65%	56%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

Table 45. Percent Reporting Reason as Important in Child Turnover in Homes, by Region, 2004

Region	Can't afford Copay	Parent Unemployed	Family Moved
1	34%	52%	36%
2	35%	45%	30%
3	28%	54%	48%
4	23%	41%	48%
5	11%	62%	47%
6	20%	59%	41%
Statewide	26%	51%	42%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes

Collection of Fees and Co-payments

The 2004 survey included questions on the problems that providers have in collecting fees and co-payments. Center and family home providers were asked how they react when a parent fails to pay their fees or co-pays and providers caring for subsidized children were asked how often they collect co-pays.

Providers selected the response that best described what they do when a parent fails to pay either their fees or co-payments from the following choices: always or usually stop providing services, sometimes stop providing services, often continue providing services, or don't have problems with parents paying for services. Tables 46 and 47 show the percentage of center and home providers choosing each of the response categories. Family home providers are much more likely to continue providing care after missed payments than centers in every region. Statewide, 41 percent of centers said they always stop providing services after missed payments in comparison to 17 percent of homes. On the other hand, 58 percent of homes said that they do not have problems in collecting fees from their parents as compared to 21 percent of centers.

Table 46. Center Response to Parents Not Paying Fees or Co-payments, by Region, 2004

Region	Always Stop Serving	Sometimes Stop Serving	Often Continue Serving	No Problem Collecting Fees/Co-pays
1	51%	12%	19%	18%
2	39%	27%	12%	22%
3	49%	20%	17%	14%
4	27%	24%	20%	28%
5	44%	21%	13%	21%
6	46%	25%	12%	17%
Statewide	41%	22%	16%	21%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

Table 47. Family Home Response to Parents Not Paying Fees or Co-payments, by Region, 2004

Region	Always Stop Serving	Sometimes Stop Serving	Often Continue Serving	No Problem Collecting Fees/Co-pays
1	16%	4%	17%	61%
2	14%	6%	17%	60%
3	17%	6%	11%	62%
4	18%	7%	19%	55%
5	18%	6%	15%	58%
6	18%	8%	18%	54%
Statewide	17%	6%	16%	58%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes

Tables 48 and 49 show how often facilities collect co-pays from parents using subsidized child care. Only providers serving subsidized children were asked these questions. Frequency of collection was divided into five categories: Always collect co-pay, Usually collect co-pay, Collect co-pay about half the time, Sometimes collect co-pay, and Never or almost never collect co-pays. Over 90 percent of centers and almost 90 percent of family home providers reported that they Always or Usually collect co-pays. Looking at the other side of the spectrum—providers that seldom or never collect co-pays—only 4 percent of centers and 8 percent of family home providers collect co-pays less than half the time. Especially for family home providers, that is a much smaller percentage of providers “forgiving” payments for subsidized child care than had been the commonly accepted belief.

Table 48. Frequency of Collecting Co-payments by Centers, by Region, 2004

Region	Always Collect Copay	Usually Collect Copay	Collect Half the Time	Sometimes Collect Copay	Never Collect Copay
1	72%	23%	2%	2%	1%
2	73%	21%	2%	0%	3%
3	74%	21%	1%	1%	3%
4	75%	17%	3%	2%	4%
5	86%	8%	3%	1%	2%
6	71%	24%	3%	3%	0%
Statewide	75%	18%	2%	2%	2%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Child Care Centers

**Table 49. Frequency of Collecting Co-payments by Family Homes,
by Region, 2004**

Region	Always Collect Copay	Usually Collect Copay	Collect Half the Time	Sometimes Collect Copay
1	81%	6%	4%	3%
2	82%	7%	4%	3%
3	78%	9%	2%	4%
4	81%	11%	1%	2%
5	82%	3%	5%	4%
6	88%	5%	2%	2%
Statewide	82%	7%	3%	3%

Source: DSHS Division of Child Care and Early Learning
2004 Survey of Family Homes